

Selectmen's minutes of meeting July 7, 2014

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Dolores Harasyko

Members absent: Rosario Messina

Called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Emergency Management Director John Burrows asked Dolores to provide an update on the minimal damage from Storm Arthur. Steve and Dolores remained at work to participate in the MEMA conference call for storm updates. They then toured the roads Friday morning for damage and reported back to John Burrows. There was minimal damage, approx. cost \$3,000. The Selectmen commended the work that the highway department has done over the past three years on the dirt roads. Jeff continues to work with Steve regarding the roadwork. Patrick commented that Steve presented a plan when he was hired to improve the dirt roads by concentrating on ditch work, culvert replacements, widening the roads, and a different gravel product. With all the rain we have had it is a true testament that the plans are working. Most towns around us have had washouts and major damage.

Re-addressing the letter received from the Finance Comm. regarding revenue initiatives. Patrick asked Lisa to respond to the meals/luxury tax. Lisa said that she has had it prepared to be adopted at the fy15 town meeting but it did not make the warrant. It can be adopted at a special town meeting. The tax increase for meals/luxury would be .75% for the town. The state collects 6.25% and they then send the .75% to the town. Lisa recommended the town consider adding a motel/hotel tax at 6%. We could add both articles to an upcoming special town meeting.

Lisa updated the selectmen on an additional \$90,000 approved by the state for regional transportation. We will get our apportionment of this.

Discussed item #4 of the initiative letter regarding chapter 61B forest lands tax classification. Kathy Jacobs suggested capping the amount of land that can be designated to the chapter 61b at 62%. Patrick responded that this is a state law and we can not supercede Mass law.

Kathy asked why the selectmen have not addressed their questions with town council. Lisa responded that instead of paying town council to research the answers they went straight to the state departments and boards for the direct answers.

Regarding the fincom questions on taxing the pipeline Patrick will research the process and outcome with the Town of Agawam. They went through a very similar situation and lost at a great expense to the town.

Discussed the request from Berkshire Regional Planning to appoint a representative from the town. We will contact the Planning Board as historically the representative is usually a Planning Board member.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meeting.

Kathy Jacobs updated the Selectmen on the progress of the Strategic Planning Comm. they are in the process of doing a mailing to all households regarding their "Vision" meeting on July 23, 2014.

Mail reviewed

Warrants reviewed and signed

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Patrick Barrett

Jeffrey Grya